



WEEK 9. HOW DO GLOBAL CITIZENS APPROACH REFUGEES AND MIGRATION

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Should we admit refugees without restrictions?

YES

NO



European refugee crisis

- The summer of 2015 marked the beginning.
 - While people had been entering Europe as asylum seekers for a long time, the rate intensified dramatically in 2015, **when more than 1.3 million asylum seekers arrived asking for refugee status**, tens of thousands more than previous years.
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European Refugee Crisis

- Italy and Greece, easiest to reach by boat, were quickly overwhelmed. Living conditions deteriorated for refugees in these countries.
- Asylum seekers began walking in large numbers across the European countryside, children and belongings in tow, camping out at European train stations, in the hopes of reaching Germany, Sweden, or the United Kingdom.
- Border guards in countries across Europe began forcefully pushing back refugees.
- Antirefugee sentiments spread across Europe:
 - Hungary's prime minister said, are not fleeing for their lives but are "Muslim invaders" from which his country required protection.
 - Sixty-seven percent of British citizens approved of using the army to keep migrants and asylum seekers from entering the United Kingdom from France. Antirefugee sentiment contributed to the Brexit referendum.

A second Crisis: Refugees around the world are largely unable to get refuge

They are unable to access the minimum conditions of human dignity while they wait for a more permanent solution (either to go home or to be resettled permanently elsewhere).

About 85%, will remain in the Global South, either in inadequate refugee camps or without international aid in urban centers.

Many others will leave and seek asylum directly in a Western country, paying smugglers their life savings, putting themselves at risk of violence, and, all too often, losing their lives.

Only 2% of refugees will be able to find a new home. The remaining refugees will persist in this period of limbo and without access to the basic conditions of human dignity, for years and often decades.

Global Figures

At the beginning of 2022 more **than 92 million people worldwide** had been forced to flee their homes:

- 20.8 million refugees
- 50.8 million internally-displaced people (IDPs)
- 4.4 million asylum-seekers
- 4.2 million stateless persons
- 3.9 million Venezuelans displaced abroad
- 8.4 million people of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- 5.7 million Palestinians are registered under the mandate of the United Nations.

The United Nations estimates that **over 12 million people** have already fled **Ukraine** as a result of the Russian invasion. Oct 2022

Global Figures

Only 1% is the approximate percentage of refugees who are resettled in a new country each year.

The vast majority of refugees remain in the poorest countries in the world, where they first seek refuge.

About half live in camps run by the UN and the other half live in urban centers.

17 is the average number of years that a person is likely to remain a refugee once becoming one.

A refugee escaping war, the average length of time is 25 years.

What is an asylum-seeker?



People who have fled their homes and claim international protection, but whose status has not yet been definitively determined.

Every refugee begins as an asylum-seeker, but not every asylum-seeker will be granted refugee status.

WHAT IS A REFUGEE?

- Refugees are people who have fled their homes, crossed an international border, and cannot return because they fear their lives are in danger.
- Refugees have a right to be protected by the country in which they seek asylum, and can't be forced to return home. They also have ESCR under the UN's 1951 Refugee Convention, although these rights are often violated.



What is a migrant?

Migrants are people who move between temporary homes, either within their home country or internationally.

Migrants aren't forced to leave their country of origin due to violence, but often have just as urgent needs to find a better future, such as a lack of work in their country of origin.

This is different from an immigrant, who makes the conscious decision to move and resettle in a new country.





Keeping these two crises in mind can help us to understand the decisions of more than a million people who, in 2015, chose to risk flimsy boats on the Mediterranean rather than put up with the status quo life as a refugee.



- Do we have obligations to help all these refugees?
- Is it enough to give them food and send them home, or must we let them stay?
- Do we really have the capacity to help everyone?

Deals with Global South

In 2018, EU made agreements with Libya and Turkey to ensure that these countries, in exchange for various economic benefits, would prevent asylum seekers from departing for Europe from their coasts.

Libya, far from offering the minimum conditions of human dignity for refugees, is known for abusing refugees and migrants. Many are put in overcrowded, unsanitary detention centers. Torture, forced labor, and other forms of cruel treatment are common in these places, and some refugees are even sold into slavery.

These deals only deepened their inability to access asylum in the West and worsened the second crisis

Clashing of Rights

Refugee Convention in 1951: voluntary return to the home country, integration into the country hosting the refugee, or resettlement in another country—would be accessible to all refugees within a short amount of time.

Article 17 guarantees the right to temporary access employment (Max. 3 years).

Clashing two important moral principles with one another: principle of national sovereignty and the obligation to protect human rights.

States may have a right to exclude refugees or make their entrance to our countries difficult on principles of national sovereignty, we ought not to.

Moral obligations to refugees:

States: relatively wealthy, liberal democratic states and their members, states that have historically played a powerful role in shaping the global system

We may be the cause of their becoming refugees in the first place; perhaps our state contributed to a conflict that destabilised their country.

Humanitarian reason: perhaps their need is great and we are in a position to help.

A third reason our commitment to human rights requires that we help refugees who have no one else to help them.

Western states' obligations to help

1. Capacity to help

2. They stated commitment to liberal democracy

3. Their role in shaping the second crisis ground their responsibility

Capacity to help

Relatively wealthy Western states are in a position to take in refugees, either through asylum or resettlement. Their population density, especially countries like Canada, the United States, and Australia, tends to be lower than in other places.

Most are multicultural societies.

They have a tradition of including immigrants.

Affluent states have a duty to aid poor ones because they are the ones controlling resources globally (Henry Shue).

States have the capacity to change laws and policies

States are in charge of budgets that fund refugee programs, both domestically and abroad.

The number of refugees accepted in the United States each year is set by the president. The province of Quebec in Canada provides assistance for refugees once they are in Quebec.

Capacity to help: other countries

85% of refugees are in the Global South, such as Uganda, Pakistan, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Bangladesh, and Kenya.

Many other countries that are neither Western states nor host states—the Gulf States, China, South Korea and Russia, for example— which can and should be doing much more for refugees.

Japan resettles very few refugees but is one of the top donor states to the UNHCR.

WHAT SHOULD WE AS INDIVIDUALS DO?



WHAT SHOULD INDIVIDUALS DO?

- Among the most important things individuals can do to undermine structural injustice is to make this norm explicit and to challenge it.
- Individuals can begin to do so simply by learning more.
- Intimate as talking to family and friends about refugees.
- Collective political action: protests, online activism, and holding elected officials accountable for their lack of support for refugees.

WHAT SHOULD INDIVIDUALS DO?

Citizens can insist that as long as asylum requires clandestine movement, we need search-and-rescue operations at sea and in the desert, and not criminalize people trying to help refugees.

Citizens can demand that people have the chance to seek asylum and are treated humanely when they do so.

Key Questions

Should refugees be seen as a matter of global citizenship?

Is there a case for global citizenship and open borders?

Should refugees have a say in where they are relocated, and who they bring with them?

Are refugees (inside and outside of our own countries) our problem?